

P3, B11

HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL HEARING  
Wednesday May 9, 2012  
Pali Golf Course Clubhouse, Kaneohe

RECEIVED  
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CITY CLERK  
HONOLULU, HAWAII

**Subject: Bill 11 CD 1 - Commercial Activities at Kailua & Kalama Beach Parks**

Good afternoon Chairman and Members of the Council,

My name is Ursula Retherford, a Kailua resident for the past 40 years. I am urging your **support for Bill 11 CE1.**

As mentioned in the April 18th testimony, what is happening at the Beach Park is only an extension of the commercialization of our entire community. To understand Bill 11, we need to look at the factors that have conspired to bring us to the present tipping point and our fight for survival as a residential community.

One factor is the fact that we are a one-company town where almost 100 percent of the central business district is owned by one landlord, Kaneohe Ranch. We are at the mercy of optimum profit seeking by a company in favor of its stockholder even when that pursuit reduces the quality of life of local residents by the establishment of mega stores, the promotion of daily fleets of large tour buses with tourists to shop at its stores and crowd our beach, reducing our traffic to gridlock and turning our town into a resort destination.

The second factor is the City's acquiescence to some of Kaneohe Ranch's development projects without undertaking a comprehensive traffic study of the whole of Kailua, a study begged for by Kailua for years.

A third factor that has led us to the present situation is the City's blind eye to the selling out of our residential zoning. Kailua is being openly marketed as a resort destination by investors and entrepreneurs on thousands of websites around the world. The City has used pathetic excuses of how it lacks the tools to enforce our zoning laws and protect our quality of life.

It has also lacked the will to enforce existing laws regulating the commercial use of our beach and park, which has led to the progression we now face, and to Bill 11.

All of this "laissez-fair has led us to our present situation at the beach park and elsewhere in our community. It has led to the point where entrepreneurs who have illegally exploited our park and beach for years now insist on a seat at the table and hire lawyers to write letters to the Council, presumably to intimidate the City.

What these entrepreneurs and the City or State should be worried about are lawsuits that could arise from accidents stemming from the exposure of innocent tourists to mortal dangers in the ocean by irresponsible kayak business operators, and by the City and State's lack of regulations of these businesses. I always thought that such lack of regulations could only be found in corrupt under-developed countries.

Some of you have asked what kind of signal the passing of Bill 11 CD1 would send to the tourist industry. I believe the time has come to ask what kind of signal you would be sending to the affected residential community by not passing Bill 11. Should the financial gain of the tourist industry and associated interests trump the quality of life, and rights of a beleaguered residential community and the preservation of a fragile environment? I do not believe so.

Some of you expressed concern about creating a precedent. I believe there is nothing wrong with creating a precedent that seeks to ensure the protection of our parks and beaches, and the safety and well-being of a residential community. Such a good precedent is long overdue and in the long run benefits not only local residents but also our visitors by maintaining the harmony between the two.

Kailua is a residential community. However, if it is felt by some that Kailua should be a resort then let's go through the proper re-zoning process of public hearings where the infrastructure and all social, environmental, and economic impacts are evaluated.

I urge you to support Bill 11 CD1 and thank you very much for holding this hearing on the Windward side

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ursula Retherford".

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